

## [Itinerate Religion]

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Project worker William C. Haight

Project editor

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Form A

Circumstances of Interview

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker William C. Haight Date February 13, 1939

Address 1225 S. W. Alder

Subject Itinerate Religion.

Name and address of informant

Rev. W. C. Driver, 2404 N. E. 37 Ave., Portland

Date and time of interview February 10, 1939

Place of interview 2404 N. E. 37 Ave., Portland.

Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant

Bob Crutchfield, Elks Building, Portland, Oregon.

Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you None

Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

The living room of a small moderate priced home. The room contained a fireplace, three chairs, table, davenport, radio, rug, lamps, piano, and a potted fern. The walls were

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covered with pictures of a religious and pastoral text. The mantel was well filled with vases, pictures and books. Furniture was in good condition. General good taste in color harmony.

Form B

Personal History of Informant

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker William C. Haight Date February 13, 1939

Address 1225 S. W. Alder

Subject Itinerate Religion

Name and address of informant Rev. W. C. Driver, 2404 N. E. 37 Ave., Portland, Oregon.

Information obtained should supply the following facts:

1. Ancestry
2. Place and date of birth
3. Family
4. Places lived in, with dates
5. Education, with dates

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6. Occupations and accomplishments with dates

7. Special skills and interests

8. Community and religious activities

9. Description of informant

10. Other points gained in interview

1. English.

2. 1867, February 24th.

3. Wife.

4. Virginia farm, four years 1872-1876. Missouri farm 17 years. 1876-1893. (Near Versailles). Colorado for a brief period. William Jewell College—Missouri. California and Oregon, 1895.

5. William Jewell College—presumably between 1893 and 1895. No degree; called Doctor as a “probable well-earned courtesy.”

6. Evangelist.

7. Radio.

8. Evangelistic work on behalf of the Baptist Church. 2 9. The Rev. Driver is at least six feet tall, with a military bearing. When he stands up he seems to tower over everything. Looks unassailable. (My mental picture was of Washington crossing the Delaware). He stands with his long sensitive fingers grasping the lapels of his dark blue suit. His alert blue

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eyes have a piercing quality. His face shows few lines, but these are deep. He is a picture of kindly dignity.

10. The Rev. Driver notes, with pardonable pride, his striking resemblance to another early pioneer preacher, of the same name, in Oregon territory. He often refers to this. He has traced from a genalogical standpoint the possibility of a relationship. As yet he has found none.

Form C

Text of Interview (Unedited)

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker William C. Haight Date February 13, 1939

Address 1225 S. W. Alder

Subject Itinerate Religion

Name and address of informant

Rev. W. C. Driver, 2404 N. E. 37th, Portland, Oregon.

Text:

The early days of preaching in Oregon have been filled with pleasant memories for my devoted wife and myself. In our evangelistic work we had to travel from house to house,

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staying wherever we could. These visits in other homes were most trying. The usual house had about one-half dozen people in three or four rooms.

When my wife and I would visit with the people they would have to bed-down the children on the floor. Most often my wife and I would have preferred the floor to the torturous mattresses we have had to sleep on. We were subjected to every inconvenience humanly imaginable. The food though usually plentiful ranged from the ghastly to the less horrible. Often I have wondered how man could live on the food I have had to eat.

These homes we visited in were primitive in conveniences. Most of the people had a well quite a distance from the house, where they obtained water. These wells often were most unsanitary. The distance of the wells from the houses was probably responsible for the usual amount of filth that we found. Sanitation and domestic science were unheard of in those days. Most everything was accomplished in as simple and direct a manner as possible.

Obtaining a bath was perhaps one of the hardest things to do. We usually had little privacy in these homes. Our room, when not utilized for sleeping was used, in many cases, for other things during the day. This added to the precarious task of bathing. It was a great task to bring the water from the well, find space on the stove to take the chill off the water, and then find a tub large enough to bathe in. Then barring the people from the room was the problem. Either my wife, or myself, would take refuge in the tub while the other stood guard at the door to bar the family from entering. Many, many times we were embarrassed by interruptions—although there was little attention paid to such interruptions.

To survive these ordeals of inconvenience a sense of humor was a necessity.

Interesting in comparison to modern methods was the handling of dairy products. They would milk the cow, bring the milk in and separate the cream from the milk. The milk and

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cream were handled with little thought of sanitation. The products would be put in a pail and set down by a gate near the road until the mailman would pick it up.

A modern mother would be horror-stricken if she thought her child would have to drink unsanitary milk. Then, milk was milk and sanitation was skimming the dirt off the top.

Transportation presented a difficult problem. Particularly so during bad weather. Many, many times the mud was hub-deep on the wagon wheels, necessitating the driver and quite often the passengers got out and help the horses lift the wagon out of the mire.

The church was usually several miles from the homes we had to stay in.

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This was bad because the people we were staying with would have to get up much earlier in order to get us to church. They were kind and agreeable, though, most of the time.

Later we were rewarded for our sacrifice by an appointment as pastor in one of the railway cars operating in Oregon.

These cars were given thrilling (sic) names:

Evangel (Poetic and thrilling).

Emmanuel (God With Us).

Message of Peace.

Glad Tidings.

Good Will.

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Grace (An all steel car. Commemorating the memory of a girl, that died. Her family were extremely wealthy—to perpetuate her memory they presented the Baptist Church with this lovely car).

The name of our car was Good Will. It was fitted out so we could seat about 100 people in it. The opposite end from the church part, was fitted up as our living quarters. This car was most convenient in living arrangements.

These cars aided us in performing a valuable service to the isolated people of Oregon.

In the southern part of the state there were children as old as 20 that had never heard a Christian service. They would walk miles to hear the preacher in the railway car. The novelty of the car probably attracted them as much as the religious side. Children generally, were delighted with the idea of going to church in a railway car.

My wife and I lived in this car for 12 years. Here we developed the habit of eating only two meals a day, which is still our routine. We have breakfast at nine in the morning and our other meal at 4:30. (Personal observation: It seems incredible—his wife looks like an inverted washtub, and he definitely is not enemy).

Form D

Extra Comment

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

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Name of worker William C. Haight Date February 13, 1939



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Subject Itinerate Religion

Name and address of informant Rev. W. C. Driver

2404 N. E. 37th, Portland, Oregon.

Comment:

Rev. Driver's most striking quality is his dignity. His dignity has a gracious rather than arrogant air.

Whatever success he has had in his calling he generously crowns Mrs. Driver with the art of being an invaluable aide de camp.

Her devotion to her husband is pronounced.

Rev. Driver has a peculiar pride in his ancestry.